

Guide to the *Optimist Club of Montclair Collection*

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Summary of Contents

Creator(s):

Charles Seelinger, president of Optimist Club of Montclair ca. 1960s-1970s

Dates:

1969-1984

Location:

Clark House, 3rd Floor Archives

Quantity:

1 Box

History of the Optimist Club

The first official Optimist Club was formed in Buffalo, NY in 1911. The association of clubs that is known today as Optimist International was formed on June 19, 1919. The current mission statement of Optimist International is “By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities and ourselves.”¹ Montclair’s Optimist Club was chartered on December 7, 1926 and continued until at least 1999.

Biographical Information on Charles Seelinger

Charles Seelinger (1923-2019) was born in Irvington, NJ and graduated Irvington High School in 1941. After graduation he worked in the time department of Federal Shipbuilding Co. in Kearny, NJ. In 1943, he enlisted in the Signal Corps of the Army and saw action in Europe as part of the Third Army. During WWII, he participated in the Battle of Bulge in France and later saw action in the Pacific Theatre. By the end of the war, Charles reached the rank of Private First Class. After the war, Charles joined the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company and eventually rose to become the Manager of Community Relations. He would also become the chairman of the North Essex Holiday Fund. Charles joined the Optimist Club in 1962 and first became president in 1966. Charles died on July 6, 2019 at the age of 96. He is buried in Mount Hebron Cemetery.

¹ <https://www.optimist.org/>, 15 February 2024.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of a scrapbook, newsletters, photographs, magazines, brochures, and newspaper clippings. Some of the material was created as early as 1969, but the majority was created in the 1970s and early 1980s. A majority of the material is related to the time Charles was president of the Optimist Club in the 1970s.

Arrangement Note

The files in this collection are arranged by theme (photographs, archival material, and scrapbook). Within each theme, the material is sorted into chronological order. The staff and volunteers responsible for the processing of this collection felt that this was the most sensible arrangement due to the material being related to only one organization. This collection has been entered by file folder into the PastPerfect database. Corresponding Object ID numbers are listed on folders and the scrapbook.

Container List

This is an inventory of the collection. The contents are arranged by folder, with some items on their own (i.e. books, magazines).

Folder	Content Information
Scrapbook Charles Seelinger President 1976-1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contains photos, newspaper clips, documents, and Optimist Club Newsletter. Themes: 50th anniversary of club (1976), Annual Yule Cup Classic (1976), Circus (1977).
The Co-Optimist Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spanning years 1969 to 1982
Misc. Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contains pamphlet, documents, magazines. Interesting items:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ North American Wilderness Survival School pamphlet (1973-74)○ <i>Travel&Leisure</i> Magazine (1975)○ Annual Yule Cup (1975, 1976, 1977)○ Document discussing Montclair Volunteer Ambulance Unit presenting information for upcoming Optimist Meeting (1977)○ Document certifying appointment Charles Seelinger as Optimist Club Primary Delegate (1981)○ Optimist Magazine (1984)

Misc. Photographs	Contains eight photographs. Four of the photos are Optimist award ceremonies. 5/31/1979 "Respect for Law" award given to Thomas P. McCormick. Other four photos - social function at garden, bowling, Charles Seelinger with friend, people holding coffee mugs.
Plant Sales Seminar photographs	Contains 22 photos. Unknown date.
Basketball Game, 1981	Contains 16 photographs and two newspaper clips. Wheelchair Basketball game between New Jersey Blue Devils vs Montclair State Cage players (Basketball Players) on Friday 4/3/81. Helped raised funds for township projects.